



The rewards of integrity are innumerable, acquired through consistant honesty and quality service

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In May of this year, 2012, Apollo HVAC will be celebrating its 40-year anniversary. It is a little strange to think that Apollo is older than some of our employees. It is a good feeling, however, that we have retained both employees and customers for well over 30 years. I like to think that says something about a company, about our company.

It was 1980, Apollo HVAC's 8th year in business. Those first eight years were not easy for us, not easy for anyone, I guess. Having survived double-digit interest rates, long lines at the gas pumps and high unemployment, like most businesses Apollo was in survival mode. Throughout those first eight years we maintained a business strategy of honesty and integrity. We endeavored to build our company using those principles, every day, without compromise. In most of our lives, both business and personal, we look back on pivotal decisions or opportunities. I remember Apollo's pivotal opportunity as if it were yesterday.

I was in my office on a hot July afternoon when I received a phone call from the manager of an office building located in Syosset. He went on to explain that he was having major complaints of insufficient cooling in a large part of the building and was not happy with and did not trust the solution offered by his present service contractor. In fact, he had lost confidence in them. I was unfamiliar with him and this company, but looked at this as an opportunity to gain a new customer if I could solve the problem. About an hour later I met one of my service techs at the office building on Jericho Turnpike. The building manager walked us through the building to the area experiencing the problem that was at least 10 degrees warmer than the rest of the building. This was a 200,000 s/f, class A office building and was served by five A/C systems so the problem affected about a fifth of all tenants.

The problem with the one system was the outdoor air intake dampers were stuck in the open position drawing in hot humid outdoor air which the system could not handle. The problem was easy to find but not so easy to fix. Not to get technical, it was a problem of linkage adjustments and degrees of actuator rotation. The fix required nothing more than some patience. Two hours later we had the dampers working and the building starting to cool down. I remember thinking to myself how could this have been missed? So I informed the building manager it was fixed, thanked him and asked that they keep us in mind for future work. Before I got back to my office my pager (remember those?) went off. Finding a pay phone (remember those?) I called and received a message to stop at the building owner's office in Melville.

The owner of that building was very grateful for two reasons. First because we had fixed the system; and second that we charged him fairly, in fact the invoice was for \$250. He asked how large the company was, and I told him about 12 people. He said, "You better start hiring more because I want you to do all my work." After millions of s/f, thousands of service calls and hundreds of tenants in

three states, they are still a customer. Yes, 32 years later, Apollo is still here, that service tech is now a key employee and manages this customer. Unfortunately, the building owner I met that hot July day in 1980 is no longer with us and I miss him. He too, was a man of integrity; his word was his bond.

The end of the story? Not at all! His integrity was passed on to his children, the next generation. Sadly that is not always the case. Yes, they are still friends first, then customers. We meet when we can to discuss business, and then exchange stories about their dad. That relationship means more to me than any amount of business ever could. Oh, and that service tech? He is still with Apollo and manages the service and construction projects for that same owner. Yes, those are the rewards of integrity!

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